(69) Tx P: 1-9

Mr.Escott Reid, who has just vacated the office of High Commissioner for Canada in India, recently said that ours is " a country which is direct heir of three of the great civilizations of the world, the Ancient Hindu civilization, the civilization of Islam and the civilization of Western Christendom". The object of Mr.Reid was to indicate the excellent cultural environment that the country provides for the education of young men. But the significance of his observations may be considered in another context. A composite civilization like ours cannot obviously spread evenly over the whole country. The proportion in which the three elements are combined must vary in different regions, imparting to each a different shade of culture. In northern India (and when I say northern India, I am thinking also of Rajasthan), the civilization of Islam is more in evidence than in south India. This is natural because you were nearer the seats of Muslim power than ourselves in the south. At the same time, it is somewhat surprising that this should be so, because nowhere were the conflicts between Hindus and Muslims more bitter and persistent than they were in these parts. Inspite of this, however, the interaction of civilizations went on as a silent and inevitable process. We too had the impact of Islamic civilization but it came late. It was intermitent and the reactions were local and superficial. They are almost negligible except perhaps in parts of the former Hyderabad State.

Islamic civilization in these parts is reflected in various customs and manners, in the types of architecture and fine arts that have developed here, and, on the social ~~front~~ side, in the greater seclusion of women. The patterns of administration evolved in Delhi by Muslim as well as Hindu administrators spread to the courts and principalities of North India. And Persian and Arabic expressions came to be freely used in official correspondence. Persian was also the fashionable language of scholarship.

South India on the other hand shows more prominently

the influence of the civilization of western christendom. Some of the earliest British, French and Portugese settlements were in the coastal regions of South India. It is believed that the origins of Christian religion in south India go back to the first century A.D. Thanks mainly to the pioneering work of British and other Christian missionaries, the study of English is widespread in south India. It is popular - it is indeed too popular. Some of our educated young men and even some of our young women are unable to speak two sentences together in their mother tongue without introducing a couple of English words. In the official world the British services set the patterns of behaviour and their traditions are still in vogue. Here, I fancy, these traditions must have received something of a Moghul orientation.

Hindu civilization forms the largest common factor of culture of north and south India. But there are some differences in attitudes, preferences and even background. Broadly speaking the religious practices in the south show a tendency towards austerity and ceremonial rigidity. In north India congregational worship and community celebrations are somewhat more picturesque and even riotous. They show comparatively little influence of the priestly classes. For the celebration of the holy feast in northern India, it is very difficult to find an exact counterpart in the south. It is more in the spirit of Christmas than in the spirit of the Lent that most of your religious festivals are observed.

Civilizations march along the length of great rivers and the nature and behaviour of the rivers leave an imprint on the relative civilizations. His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore has observed "while India believes that all the rivers are sacred, 7 rivers are singled out for special attention. They are the Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narbada, Sindhu and Kauvery. The Godavari, Kistna, Lauvery, and Narmada are the famous rivers of south India." The Godavari is associated with the story of Rama just as the river Yamuna in the north is associated with the story of Krishna.

The Yamuna is near enough to you. But the sacred river par excellence of Rajasthan is Saraswati. His Highness Maharaja of Mysore says that Rig Veda repeatedly mentioned this river. It is believed that in Vedic times many sacrifices were conducted on its banks. But this river is not in evidence now. It is believed that Saraswati disappeared in ancient times in the deserts of Rajasthan. There is a popular belief that the Saraswati joins the Ganga and Yamuna at Allahabad as an underground river.

While the impact of different elements of a composite civilization and the influence of rivers and other natural environment account for some of the regional differences in our country, that is by no means the whole explanation. Political divisions have greatly added to other causes to keep people from the different parts of the country coming together. It is no exaggeration to say that only 10 or 12 years ago a person from the south visiting a northern State like say Jaipur felt like a stranger in the land and only had a remote interest in its affairs. Your past was history. Your present problems were something of a mystery. British influence was a unifying force in former Part A States. In former Part B States this influence was indirect and feeble. Until the end of the first world-war British policy was to isolate the several Part B States and prevent the Princes coming too closely together. The intercourse between the people likewise was casual.

Now all this is rapidly changing. With Independence, and the integration and democratization of the States, people all over the country have gained a sense of belonging to a common polity. Their common history and common traditions have received a new orientation. They now perceive that they have essentially the same common problems - economic, administrative and political, and a common destiny to work for. The Bharatversha of today is more real than its prototype in legend and poetry.

This political unity has been achieved under a constitution which is predominantly western and

which shows hardly any trace of Hindu or Islamic civilization. The distribution of functions between the Union and the States was based on a comparative study of the constitutions of Australia, the U.S.A. and Canada the results of which were already embodied in the ~~Indian Constitution~~ Govt of India Act 1935. The scheme of distribution of subjects contained in the Act had only to be revised and brought into line with the status of India as an independent country. Our most important political institutions - Parliament and the State Legislatures - are frankly modelled on the British Parliament - down to the last details. A legislative body consisting of representatives of the whole adult population - of both sexes and of all grades of education and intelligence - and perpetually passing new laws was alien to Hindu and Islamic concepts. According to our learned Rotarian friend Mr.Sastry from whose forthcoming work I have just been reading some extracts, "it is to this day a basic postulate among the followers of the Hindu tradition that not only law and usage but all knowledge is enshrined in the Veda". Elsewhere he has pointed out that "in ancient Hindu theory, the temporal sovereign was not the source of law. Man-made legislation and revealed law were incompatibles". The Islamic theory of Shariat was, I believe, not very different. Not that our ancient law was static. It was adjusted to the changing needs of the times by the interpretation of learned commentators and sometimes even by the decrees of Kings with the advice of counsellors noted for their wisdom and learning. But they professed only to discover, expound or apply law derived from a higher source - and this was done on rare occasions. To our ancestors our present method of law-making by such agencies as Parliament would have appeared impertinent, if not sacrilegious. Parenthetically I may remark that among secular legislators, the former emperors of China were the most blatant. Their edicts always ended with the words "Tremble and obey".

When our constitution was placed in draft form before the Constituent Assembly some of its members were surprised at the form in which it crystallised. They indignantly asked what [redacted] way

there
~~was~~ Indian or nationalistic about it? Of course, there was nothing in it redolent of ancient India. For more than half a century the Congress itself and every other party had been asking for a Parliamentary form of Government. They got it. There was no alternative in the field. To satisfy the nationalistic sentiments, an elaborate provision for the establishment of village Panchayats was included in the Chapter entitled Directive Principles of State Policy. And with still more elaborate provisions about the adoption of Hindi as the official language, the qualms of nationalistic conscience, were satisfied.

Our system of judiciary, again, was a continuation of the British system in the form in which it had grown up in our country. Researchers might have discovered some parallels to it in the old Hindu judicial system. But it was not for this reason that this part of the Constitution elicited no critical comment. The Privy Council which had been anathema to our politicians was cut out and a Supreme Court was established. The principle that judicial and executive functions should be separated - a principle for which our political sufferers had been fighting was conceded. These concessions satisfied everybody and made the judicial system acceptable.

Unlike our legislatures and judicature our system of administration is not simply a copy of British or other western models. It was no doubt a continuation of the former British Indian system. But the system was as much Indian as it was British. It was, in fact, sui generis. Within a broad British imperial background, it embodied important features of Hindu and Mohamedan rule. A heirarchy of officials from the village headman at the base to functionaries corresponding to Divisional Commissioners and provincial Governors at the top was a familiar enough organization in earliest times. The British built on this groundwork. They brought into civil administration more sharply defined gradations of rank and authority corresponding to gradations in the British Army.

...itish came to power they found the Jagirdari system in force in many parts of the country. It had many features of former British feudalism but its retention was incompatible with the basic concepts of British imperial rule in India. It was therefore liquidated in most parts of the country. It however survived into recent times in Hyderabad, Rajasthan and other north Indian States. In its origin it was the machinery by which the Mohamedan conquerors held the people in subjection. It also served the Hindu rulers as a means of organised defence against oppression by their suzerains and against predatory attacks by their neighbours. It had long outlived its useful purpose if any and had become a hindrance to civil administration. After Independence, the abolition of this system was inevitable. It is passing into the limbo of history.

The Zamindari system was a purely British creation. The British administrators could not understand a rural economy without a squirearchy. They elevated the farmers of revenue into landed proprietors hoping that they would improve rural conditions on the one hand and would on the other hand serve as a prop for British rule, out of gratitude and a lively sense of self interest. With the emergence of the Congress theory that land belongs to the tiller of the soil the fate of the Zamindars was sealed. The Zamindari legislation has swept off not only the fat Zamindar but also the minor landholders paying assessment at permanently fixed rates.

In a foreword to a work on the Indian Mutiny, Maulana Azad is reported to have observed that Indian discontent with the British "was aggravated by two measures which may be regarded as immediately responsible for the revolt of 1857. One was the policy of the Company to dispossess the nobility and the landlords and bring their tenants directly under it. The other and perhaps the decisive factor was Dalhousie's policy of incorporating into British territory one Indian State after another". This is exactly what the Congress Governments have done and they are applauded for it.

Among the vestiges of our Hindu civilization two things which are now receiving special attention may be mentioned. They areSanskrit learning and the Indian system of Medicine. Their survival is due to the patronage extended to them by the former rulers of States and by some of the State Governments of the present day who are animated by a spirit of enlightened nationalism. There is no question that the revival of Sanskrit learning will be of great benefit not only to India but to the whole world. As regards the Indian system of Medicine, however, there is room for difference of opinion. Much depends upon the way in which the system is applied and developed. Freed from obscurantism and approached in a scientific spirit the Indian system of Medicine should be able to make a real contribution to the modern techniques of healing.

When India won her independence, it had one of two ideologies to follow. Some of our respected national leaders ——— headed by Gandhiji himself visualized for us a life of plain living and high thinking under such titles as Sarvodaya, Ram Rajya and so on. There is another school of thought which considers that that is all utopian and that the country should progress on Western lines, building up large basic industries, keeping large armies with upto-date equipment, and maintaining a complicated system of law and of expensive law courts of the British type. It is this view which is, by and large, dominating the peoples' thoughts and public policy. While discarding political ties with the western world, we are following western ideologies and practices. We have had two 5 Year Plans. Their object is to promote the material prosperity of the country and improve the standard of living of the common people. Inspite of great obstacles this is being achieved to some extent. National Planning has spotlighted the dependence of the States on one another and on the Central Government. We have had political integration for some time. We are now achieving psychological integration through common effort in pursuit of the Plans. Their success lies not only on the efforts of individual States but on the measure of assistance they receive from Central resources.

Within 10 years our affairs have moved from the regional plane to a national plane and we are fast realising the importance of international factors in the achievement of our economic destiny.

Saraswati is a sacred river which irrigated and fertilized your land. Saraswati is also the goddess of learning. The disappearance of Saraswati in the deserts of Rajasthan symbolized two things. Rajasthan's sources of surface water have become exiguous and its agricultural economy has suffered. Secondly, such educational importance as Rajasthan might have enjoyed at one time has been lost. Today it is, and for a long time past has been, educationally the most backward State in India. Both these handicaps are being removed in the new order of things ushered in by Independence. There was something done in the old regime. Through the efforts of late Maharaja Ganga Singh parts of the Bikaner State received the waters of Sutlej - a unique instance of irrigation benefits extended to non-riparian territory. You are getting a proportion of the waters in the Bhakra reservoirs to irrigate lakhs of acres of this thirsty land. Then again you have been admitted to a half share in the storage of the Chambal project. You are not as yet paying anything in cash for these projects. With just your I.O.U. they are being financed and carried out for you by the Central Government. Obviously all this could not have happened when India was a congeries of States and Rajasthan itself (next to Saurashtra) the most Balkanised area in our country.

With the same Central assistance your State Government have carried out educational programmes of a variety and magnitude which the former State-Governments, however enlightened they might have been, could not have undertaken with their limited resources in such a short period. I am told there are in Rajasthan 14 degree and Post-graduate Colleges, 27 Intermediate Colleges, 824 Middle Schools, 7238 Primary Schools, 2 Engineering Colleges, 13 Sanskrit Colleges and 95 Sanskrit Pathsalas. An appreciable number of all these were started under the First Five Year Plan. For a first effort this is an impressive record and there is

every assurance that the good work so well begun will be continued under the Second Plan.

Verily, the goddess Saraswati is again in your midst smiling on your parched lands and blessing your educational efforts.

What about the future? There are people like Vinoba Bhave who are spreading the Bhoodan movement and appealing to the nation to follow its ancient ideals. Nevertheless, the Indian caravan is marching on the western highway. Some of the weary travellers may complain or fall by the way side but the leaders of the caravan are confident of taking it to the destination by forced marches, if need be. Let us wish them and ourselves good luck.

JAI HIND.

Government of India.
Ministry of Labour.

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Dated, Ootacamund, the 10th May, 1953.

From

Shri K. D. Ker, I.C.S., M.L.A.,
Secretary, Bombay Textile Labour
Investigation Committee.

To

The Secretary to the Govt. of India,
Ministry of Labour,
New Delhi.

Sir,

Referring to the recommendation of the Bombay Textile Labour Investigation Committee, I am to forward herewith [illegible] copies of the Report of the Committee [illegible] Bombay Textile Labour Investigation Committee [illegible] Bombay Textile Labour Investigation Committee [illegible] Bombay Textile Labour Investigation